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'Progressive,' 'Nation' Refuted

House Intelligence Panel Exposes Media Falsehoods

The Democratic-controlled House Intelligence Committee has released a report exposing the phony nature of media charges that the Central Intelligence Agency was supporting Salvadoran death squads and that U.S. intelligence covered up information on the Soviet destruction of Korean Air Lines flight 007.

But the committee failed to identify the names of those left-wing journalists and media organizations which publicized the false allegations. The report says only that the committee looked at "press reports and materials from private organizations" on the issue of death squads and investigated "a spate of questions in the media" on KAL.

However, then-Rep. James Shannon (D.-Mass.)—who requested the investigation of the death squads—and committee staff members confirmed that two far-left publications, *the Progressive* and *The Nation*, were the main impetus behind the committee's spending untold thousands of taxpayer dollars to investigate charges which critics said were dubious and unsubstantiated on their face.

Both publications have extremely close ties to the Institute for Policy Studies, a pro-Marxist think-tank with ties to both the Soviet Union and Cuba.

The May 1984 issue of *the Progressive* had carried an "exclusive report" which claimed that "the CIA—in violation of U.S. law—continues to provide training, support and intelligence to security forces directly involved in death squad activity." The story referred to "a pattern of sustained U.S. participation in building and managing the Salvadoran security apparatus that relies on death squad assassinations as its principal means of enforcement." *The Progressive* later took out a full-page advertisement in the *Washington Post* plugging this story.

The author, Allan Nairn, was described by *the Progressive's* editor, Erwin Knoll—a former *Washington Post* editor—as a 28-year-old freelance writer whose reporting has been used "by such varied outlets as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *New Republic*, *In These Times*, the *Guardian* of London, *MultiNational Monitor* and CBS News."

Nairn is also a former "research fellow" of the leftist-oriented Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

Despite *the Progressive's* charges, the Intelligence Committee reported, "The staff's review of operational intelligence relationships leads it to conclude that U.S. intelligence agencies have not conducted any of their activities in such a way as to directly encourage or support death squad activities. To the contrary, U.S. intelligence activities have been directed, sometimes successfully, at countering death squad activity, reducing the power of individuals connected with death squads, and seeking their removal from positions of authority."

The August 18 issue of *The Nation* magazine had carried an article suggesting that U.S. intelligence knew KAL-007 was off-course but failed to warn the plane before it was shot down by the Soviets. The implication was that the U.S. could have saved the lives of the 269 men, women and children on board.

The author, David Pearson, was a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at Yale University and didn't have any particular expertise in the intelligence matters under discussion. Nevertheless, Pearson soon appeared on the NBC "Today Show" and his story was picked up by Tom Wicker, a New York

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